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Motion to Alter Graduate Faculty Status Procedure

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Approved by the Senate: 6/25/2003 (Tabled)

Not Approved by the Senate:

Approved by the President:

Nor Approved by the President:

Motion to Alter Graduate Faculty Status Procedure

Submitted by Jim McMillan

Motion:

Rationale:

Senate Response:

6/25/2003: Motion to Alter Graduate Faculty Status Procedure

Jim McMillan (CHHS), who chaired the responsible subcommittee, is not on the Senate, so Jerry Wilson (COBA) moved acceptance of a new process for obtaining and renewing Graduate Faculty Status, and of new categories: Member (for tenure-track and tenured faculty) and Affiliate (temporary, adjunct, etcetera). Seconded.

Cyr (CLASS) said several people had raised concerns to him. While the proposal made the process more rational and streamlined, it remained cumbersome to little purpose: The Universitywide criteria for Member and Affiliate create pretty much automatic status for anyone with a terminal degree; hence, there's no real "nomination" at all. Also, the nomination form requires a five-signature paper trail, and the renewal process requires yet more bureaucracy even though only documented deficiencies will prevent pretty much automatic renewal.

Senate guest McMillan argued that there was little work involved in the new process, hence it was not cumbersome, and it provided documentation for the individual's vita that the faculty and administration find this person able to participate in the graduate program.

Karen McCurdy (CLASS), who just went through the currently required hideous slog to apply for graduate faculty status, concurred that the new proposal eliminates most of the burden.

Senate guest Larry Mutter (CHHS) noted that he and Senate Moderator David Allen (CLASS) had originated the review that led to this proposal. He felt much of the paperwork had been simplified, but pointed out that it includes even more layers of endorsements than the current system. He proposed following the University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill model: If you have a terminal degree when appointed, you get automatic graduate faculty status. The Associate Dean of Graduate Studies at UNC-CH told him “the old process was onerous and now things work like a charm.”

Mutter handed Cyr two possible amendments, which Cyr modified and proposed as an omnibus amendment: Eliminate the first paragraph as unnecessary clutter; delete everything beginning with the “Note” on page 2 (because it allows departments and colleges to define a University-level status) through the renewal process; add language about negative post-tenure reviews possibly leading to revocation of status.

Jeanette Rice (COST) was concerned about violation of privacy re: reporting negative reviews to a committee. Wilson noted such reports would go to the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies, not to the Graduate Committee. Flynn (CLASS) found this problematic, believing the faculty committee should vote on whether or not to revoke status. He also asked whether current graduate faculty would have to reapply, since there was no grandfathering clause in the document.

McMillan said grandfathering was intended; Flynn said it needed to be in the document. Cyr noted also that successful promotion applications eliminate that period’s post-tenure review for an individual, and the process needed to take that into consideration.

Jim LoBue (COST) pointed out that we were now at a stage where we had two separate issues – how we grant graduate faculty status, and how we rescind it – and suggested two motions, not one. McMillan pointed out that what we were talking about would require changes to the language of the Faculty Handbook. Cyr opined that we were revising official language on-the-fly, and suggested any suggested changes be taken back to committee for coherent writing.

Clara Krug (CLASS) suggested we needed to settle on some clear directions to give the Graduate Committee or they wouldn’t have a clear idea of the Senate’s wishes; David Stone (COST) agreed, noting he couldn’t even tell whether the Senate wanted further

process simplification or not. He added that he himself did not favor more simplification because “. . . what’s the point of having a graduate faculty if everybody’s on it?” Senate guest Kathleen Comerford commented that she thought this discussion was about how graduate faculty status was gained, so she could not see how the subject of how such status could be revoked had come up. Cyr noted that, unless uselessly automatic, the system for status renewal would have to have non-renewal as an option; he apologized for using “rescinding ” and “revoking” rather than “non-renewal.” As if things weren’t confused enough, there followed a daisy-chain of motions to amend amendments. Krug suggested that taking elements of the proposal individually would help. Cyr withdrew his original omnibus motion.

He then moved that the first paragraph be struck as useless clutter. Seconded. John Brown (COBA) said the paragraph was consistent with what the Graduate Faculty should be. The motion was defeated.

Cyr then moved that all language from the “Note” on page 2 to the end of the document be deleted. Seconded. McCurdy (CLASS) opposed the amendment because it would leave the current “awful” application process in place. Ming Fang He (COE) opposed the amendment because some kind of required process gives junior faculty a goal to work toward, and standards that need to be achieved make Graduate Faculty status an honor. Flynn argued that process was needed to provide a means by which a faculty member going elsewhere can produce a document proving he or she earned graduate faculty status at Georgia Southern. Guest Mutter suggested no cumbersome process was needed to produce such a letter.

Cyr asked for an example of who, under this proposed “nomination” procedure, would not receive graduate faculty status. It seemed to him that the definitions of Member and Affiliate were a checklist, that one either did nor did not meet the criteria, hence there is not a real “nomination.” Wilson (COBA) said that the proposal means the Graduate Committee won’t be the policeman that turns people down; individual units will establish criteria that say who can and cannot chair thesis and dissertation committees. Cyr opined that units had that discretion via the Member and Affiliate definitions already since they made faculty only “eligible” to serve in these positions, but left allowing them that role to the unit. Wilson felt the page 2 “Note” was needed because then units could add other criteria before “eligible” would actually mean “allowed to.” Cyr’s motion was defeated.

This brought us back to the original motion to accept the whole Graduate Committee proposal without amendment. Brown (COBA) opined that the nomination procedure

seemed “a little involved” and asked why some of the signature lines on the form say the signatory “approves,” and others say the signatory “endorses”; he noted the terms are not synonyms. Guest McMillan noted “approved” was reserved for faculty representative signatories; the “endorsed” lines merely note the person has seen the paperwork and passed it on.

Flynn (CLASS), a member of the sub-committee that wrote the proposal, nevertheless moved that all language from “appointment period” on be deleted. Seconded. Echoing earlier comments by Cyr, he noted that negative pre-tenure and tenure reviews result in a faculty member leaving, so graduate faculty status reviews at those times are moot, and review periods need to take promotions into account. He added that a grandfathering clause is needed. His motion for amendment was approved. Krug moved that a grandfather clause be added. Seconded and approved. Cyr moved that the document be tabled so the committee could coherently work out the revisions. Seconded and approved; the original motion was tabled.